

into a variety of different components, sharing different resources (including processing units, memory, clock devices, and software routines) as required for the particular implementation of the embodiments disclosed herein. Indeed, even a single general purpose computer executing a computer program stored on a recording medium to

5 produce the functionality and any other memory devices referred to herein may be utilized to implement the illustrated embodiments. Interface devices utilized by, in, or in conjunction with the system 300 may be any device used to input and/or output information. The interface devices may be implemented as a graphical user interface (GUI) containing a display or the like, or may be a link to other user input/output

10 devices known in the art.

Furthermore, memory units employed by the system may be any one or more of the known storage devices (e.g., Random Access Memory (RAM), Read Only Memory (ROM), hard disk drive (HDD), floppy drive, zip drive, compact disk-ROM, DVD, and bubble memory), and may also be one or more memory devices embedded

15 within a CPU, or shared with one or more of the other components. Accordingly, the invention is not to be seen as limited by the foregoing description, but is only limited by the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed as new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A method of delivering a postal mailpiece, said method comprising the steps of:

detecting a proxy address on the postal mailpiece;

using the detected proxy address to obtain a recipient postal address from a
5 database of recipient postal addresses and associated recipient proxy addresses, the
addresses within the database being defined by postal recipients associated with the
addresses; and

affixing the obtained recipient postal address to the postal mailpiece so that
the mailpiece can be delivered to a physical address corresponding to the obtained
10 recipient postal address.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of detecting the proxy address
comprises detecting a symbol on the postal mailpiece that corresponds to a predefined
proxy addressing protocol.

3. A method of creating and maintaining proxy addresses for use with a
15 postal mailpiece, said method comprising the steps of:

inputting a proxy address;

inputting a recipient postal address associated with the input proxy address;
and

storing the proxy address and associated recipient postal address in a list of proxy addresses and associated recipient postal addresses.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the list is stored in a computer readable storage medium.

5 5. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of ensuring that the input proxy address does not match a proxy address contained in the list.

6. The method of claim 3 further comprising the step of ensuring that the input proxy address complies with an addressing protocol.

10 7. The method of claim 6, wherein the addressing protocol comprises a predefined symbol used to identify the input proxy address as a valid proxy address.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the symbol comprises at least a # character.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the symbol comprises at least a @ character.

15 10. The method of claim 7, wherein the symbol comprises at least a % character.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein the addressing protocol comprises a predefined addressing presentation format used to identify the input proxy address as a valid proxy address.

12. The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of:

5 inputting a new proxy address associated with a first proxy address and first recipient postal address contained in the list; and

 replacing the first proxy address with the new proxy address in the list without modifying the first recipient postal address.

13. The method of claim 3 further comprising the steps of:

10 inputting a new recipient postal address associated with a first proxy address and first recipient postal address contained in the list; and

 replacing the first recipient postal address with the new recipient postal address in the list without modifying the first recipient postal address.

14. The method of claim 3 wherein the input proxy address is input from a
15 recipient associated with the recipient postal address.

15. A method of identifying a recipient postal address from a postal mailpiece comprising a proxy address, said method comprising the steps of:

 detecting the proxy address on the postal mailpiece; and

using the detected proxy address to obtain a recipient postal address from a list of recipient postal addresses and associated recipient proxy addresses, wherein proxy addresses contained within the list are defined by postal recipients associated with the proxy addresses.

- 5 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said step of detecting the proxy address comprises detecting an identifier on the postal mailpiece that corresponds to a predefined proxy addressing protocol.

17. A method of managing a delivery of a mailpiece comprising the steps of:
inputting a proxy address;

- 10 inputting a mail handling instruction associated with this input proxy address, the instruction defining a manner in which mailpieces are to be delivered to a physical address associated with the input proxy address; and

storing the proxy address and associated mail handling instruction in a list of proxy addresses and mail handling instructions.

- 15 18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

detecting a proxy address on the postal mailpiece;

using the detected proxy address to obtain at least one associated mail handling instruction from the list; and

delivering the mailpiece in accordance with the obtained mail handling instruction.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein the input mail handling instruction comprises mail forwarding instructions.

5 20. The method of claim 17, wherein the input mail handling instruction comprises temporary mail holding instructions.

21. The method of claim 17, wherein the input mail handling instruction comprises mail routing instructions.

22. A method of providing value-added services for a mailpiece comprising
10 the steps of:

detecting the proxy address on the postal mailpiece;

using the detected proxy address to obtain a recipient value-added service from a list of recipient value-added services and associated recipient proxy addresses;
and

15 tracking a delivery of the mailpiece to provide the obtained value-added service.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the obtained recipient value-added service comprises a pre-paid postage service.

29. The system of claim 26, wherein said communication medium is the Internet.

30. The system of claim 26 further comprising a second database interface computer coupled to said computer readable storage medium by a second communication medium, said second database interface computer providing a means for recipients to modify addresses within said database.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein said second database interface computer allows a recipient associated with a first proxy address and a first recipient postal address to modify the first recipient postal address without modifying the first proxy address.

32. The system of claim 30, wherein said second database interface computer allows a recipient associated with a first proxy address and a first recipient postal address to modify the first proxy address without modifying the first recipient postal address.

33. The system of claim 30 further comprising a third database interface computer coupled to said computer readable storage medium by a third communication medium, said third database interface computer providing a means for recipients to register with said system and become authorized to modify addresses within said database.

34. A system of identifying a recipient postal address from a postal mailpiece comprising a proxy address, said system comprising:

means for detecting the proxy address on the postal mailpiece; and

5 means for using the detected proxy address to obtain a recipient postal address from a list of recipient postal addresses and associated recipient proxy addresses, wherein proxy addresses contained within the list are defined by postal recipients associated with the proxy addresses.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein said detecting means comprises means for detecting an identifier on the postal mailpiece that corresponds to a predefined proxy addressing protocol.

36. An article of manufacture comprising a machine-readable storage medium having stored therein indicia of a plurality of machine-executable control program steps, the control program comprising the steps of:

detecting a proxy address on a postal mailpiece;

15 using the detected proxy address to obtain a recipient postal address from a list of recipient postal addresses and associated recipient proxy addresses; and

delivering the mailpiece to a physical address corresponding to the obtained recipient postal address, wherein proxy addresses contained within the list are defined by postal recipients associated with the proxy addresses.

37. The article of manufacture of claim 36, wherein the control program
5 further comprises the step of modifying the list of recipient postal and proxy addresses by recipients authorized to modify the list.

38. The article of manufacture of claim 36, wherein said step of detecting the proxy address comprises detecting an identifier on the postal mailpiece that corresponds to a predefined proxy addressing protocol.

10 39. An article of manufacture comprising a machine-readable storage medium having stored therein indicia of a plurality of machine-executable control program steps, the control program comprising the steps of:

inputting a proxy address;

inputting a recipient postal address associated with the input proxy address;

15 and

storing the proxy address and associated recipient postal address in a list of proxy addresses and associated recipient postal addresses.

40. The article of manufacture of claim 39, wherein the list is stored in a computer readable storage medium.

41. The article of manufacture of claim 39, wherein the program further comprises the step of ensuring that the input proxy address does not match a proxy
5 address contained in the list.

42. The article of manufacture of claim 39, wherein the program further comprises the step of ensuring that the input proxy address complies with an addressing protocol.

43. An article of manufacture comprising a machine-readable storage
10 medium having stored therein indicia of a plurality of machine-executable control program steps, the control program comprises:

detecting the proxy address on the postal mailpiece; and

using the detected proxy address to obtain a recipient postal address from a list of recipient postal addresses and associated recipient proxy addresses,

15 wherein proxy addresses contained within the list are defined by postal recipients associated with the proxy addresses.

44. The article of manufacture of claim 43, wherein said step of detecting the proxy address comprises detecting an identifier on the postal mailpiece that corresponds to a predefined proxy addressing protocol.

45. The article of manufacture of claim 43, wherein said step of detecting
- 5 the proxy address comprises detecting a predetermined presentation format that corresponds to a predefined proxy addressing protocol.

00739959-122000